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THE

MARTYR-CRISIS:

Burnham, Benjamin Franklin

A POEM.

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PREFACE.

This little essay merely assumes to picture forth a few phases of the martyr-spirit. The representative characters and incidents have been selected more with reference to their bearing on the virtues most demanded by our own age and country, than to their relative prominence in the martyr-history of more superstitious times. That hackneyed theme, Martyrdom to the Christian Religion, has been somewhat avoided herein, for the reason mentioned by Goethe:

"'Permit me one question,' said Wilhelm, 'as you have set up the life of this Divine man for a pattern and example, have you likewise selected his sufferings, his death, as a model of exalted patience?' 'Undoubtedly we have,' replied the eldest. 'Of this we make no secret; but we draw a vail over those sufferings, even because we reverence them so highly. We hold it a

damnable audacity to bring forth that torturing cross and the Holy One who suffers on it, or to expose them to the light of the sun which hid its face when a reckless world forced such a sight on it; to take these mysterious secrets in which the divine depth of sorrow lies hid, and play with them, fondle them, trick them out, and rest not till the most reverend of all solemnities appears vulgar and paltry.'"

But the objection may not apply with equal force to any consideration of some of the primitive Christian martyrs. Says Mrs. Jameson, in her 'Sacred and Legendary Art,' —a work of sterling discrimination:

"We may admit that the reverence paid to them in former days was unreasonable and excessive; that credulity and ignorance have, in many instances, falsified the actions imputed to them; that enthusiasm has magnified their numbers beyond all belief; that when the communion with martyrs was associated with the presence of their material remains, the passion for relics led to a thousand abuses, and the belief in their intercession to a thousand superstitions. But why, in uprooting the false, uproot also the beautiful and the true? Surely it is a thing not to be set aside or forgotten, that generous men and meek women, strong in the strength and elevated by the sacrifice of a Redeemer, did suffer, did endure, did triumph for the truth's sake, did leave us an example which ought to make our hearts glow within us in admiration and grati-

tude. . . . . And why indeed should we shut up our hearts against such influences, and force ourselves to regard as a snare, what ought to be a source of divine comfort and encouragement, of power, for the awakening up of those whose minds are absorbed in selfish sorrows, or for the strengthening of those who even now are contending for the truth among us, and who perish martyrs because there prevails some form of social idolatry against which they resist unto death."

It must not be forgotton, however, that it is possible to admire too inconsiderately these pets of ecclesiastical history; that a part of their opinions may have been quite as hasty as sincere, and that the rage of their persecutors may have had some slight extenuation. Says the author last quoted:

"It was held for certain that the gods of the Pagans were demons, who had assumed the names and attributes of the popular divinities, and appropriated the incense offered on the altars. The Christians, therefore, believed in the real existence of these false gods; but their belief was mingled with detestation and horror. Idolatry was to them no mere speculative superstition, it was, if I may so apply the strong expression of Carlyle, 'a truth clad in hell-fire.' . . . . . Hence the language and bearing of the early martyrs were not only marked by resistance, but by abhorrence and defiance; hence a courage more

than human sustained them; and hence, too, the furious indignation of the priests and people, when they found their gods not merely regarded with philosophical indifference, as images or allegories, but spurned as impure, malevolent, reprobate — yet living and immortal spirits."

Symmetry of plot and minuteness of detail, are almost incompatible with the conciseness requisite to compassing in a brief poetical essay, a theme of so world-wide a range as this; especially if, as in the present case, the work be written subject to the divers moods of the author in the various leisures he may be able to snatch from the duties of an arduous profession. If to the matter-of-fact reader, that conciseness shall at any time seem obscurity, he is humbly begged to measure leniently the latitude of the domain of mingled fact and fancy, and not, until he has consulted the notes appended, to exclaim, like the old mathematician concerning Paradise Lost, "Well, what does it prove?"

If the conscientious, but hell-hunted statesman, shall have found some solace and encouragement in contemplating this unfinished picture of 'Myrtro'; if the frothy speecher shall have discovered any of his own features in the little miniature of 'Aphro'; if the younger spirit who is seething after congressional laurels shall have heeded

the whispers herein breathed into the ear of 'Zesto,' or having surveyed the death-scene of Napoleon, shall more intelligibly discern between Fame and Honor; if any soul seeking a deeper sympathy with the True, the Beautiful and the Good, shall here, as Fancy draws aside the veil of Care, catch some new glimpses thereof, or be woed thereto by any strain here feebly struck, even though it be but a re-echo of the melody of sweeter minstrels who have sung heretofore — then, more than deservedly will have been accomplished the humble aim of

THE AUTHOR.

CHICAGO, FEB. 21, 1861.

PROEM.

If He, that launched along the inane expanse
The wheeling worlds with all-controlling hand,—
The universal Presence, in whose glance
Eternal cycles as but seconds stand,—
Hath ever now this petty footstool scanned,
Where bustling myriads, in His balance weighed
As dust, or airy elves of Faeryland,
Have fain some tiny monuments essayed—
All in the bubbling flux of Eras doomed to fade:

Or if this western isle-dot hath surveyed,
The latest lodge of way-worn Liberty,
Where Man, the greediest atom He hath made,
Annihilates the guest in giddy glee,
And 'Worship' names rapacious revelry,

Perchance He 'll mark this mite of Him retire
Aloof the swarm, in meditation free,
To track their toils and wake the warning lyre,—
Will deign a golden glimpse of Heaven's pure fount of fire.

For not the earth-veiled vision may aspire
To ken the Right or thread the maze of Wrong;
The pinions of the prisoned spirit tire,
Unplumed to leave the phantom-chasing throng;
The bow, that lights the Future's cloud along
To each, has through no other's bauble glowed;
Refract is Reason's ray, and the lulled tongue
Of Conscience crowns black Ill with specious Good,
And 'lauds the Christian broker in the trade of blood.'

But when the soul hath basked beneath the flood
Of holy light from the celestial source,
Lo, where decrepit Superstition stood,
And Pride and Passion sped their ruthless course,
Fair Truth, disdungeoned of each self-thrall force,
Reveals the mystic springs of Joy and Pain,
And, as at Doom-hour, save that hour's remorse,

Shall memory ope her Time-sealed scroll amain,
Emblazons o'er the mind wild Life's fantastic train.

Ideals fade in spectre-myriads then,
And o'er Humanity's wide, billowy sea
The Reals loom in Glory once again;
There Greatness hides the pomp of Pedigree,
There Grandeur's deeds must know Love's grand decree,
There Chivalry is Virtue's hate of Hell;
Man's mission shines an unmasked majesty,
And at the sight the spirit's raptures swell,
For Truth now waves her wand and weaves her wizard spell.

Anon, the slaves of sordid sense and fell,
Assail the new born votary of the Right,
And mad and clamorous rush to crush and quell
The yearning pulses in their fiery might;
But vain to him who walks in Wisdom's light,
The Tyrant's threat, the Bigot's blandished guile!
Hope will not back to Error's bleaky night;
Yawn Death's grim gulf, blaze Torture's crackling pile,
The onward beaconed spark reflects its birthland's smile.

And haply mid the multitude the while,
Who task themselves to flee the task of Thought,
Shall many a dreamer waked from Mammon's wile,
Forsake the goal the spirit erst had sought,
And groveling denizens of Darkness, brought
Within that quenchless halo's weird domain,
Shall fight where Virtue's fallen champion fought,
Strike where an unseen sceptre shall ordain,
And shield frail Freedom's form through Power's brief liveried reign.

Nor shall they sink unhymned by human strain,
While Heaven's own minstrels chant the martyr's praise,
E'er since fair Bethlem's hushed and hallowed plain
Awoke and smiled o'erdecked in Glory's blaze,
And Sage and Shepherd tranced in mute amaze,
Heard the high pæan of all-conquering Love —
E'er down the darkling lapse of night-crowned days,
When wayward States unstarred awreck would rove,
And the All-wise His will by immolate sons would prove.

Aye, let the Muse, in mournful verse inwove
The deeds of Heaven-devoted spirits tell,
Though o'er the strifes the sainted Fathers strove,
And themes of Eld she may not longer dwell,
So to the world she meekly but reveal
Some latter mead, may lure weak Virtue strong,
Or latter life self-fated with the weal
Of Man or Country. Be no Siren's song
Where Pleasure holds the helm, or Error sails
with Wrong!

THE MARTYR-CRISIS.

I.

I trod the summit's crag, and viewed afar
The Forest's lone magnificence expand,
I heard the leaves lisp through the listening air
Their gratitude to each light breeze that fanned;
The trees twined arms, and murmured like a band
Of heart-bound brothers joying o'er the scene;
They drank the dazzling flood from Phœbus' hand,
And dallied with the cloudlets' flight, till e'en
They decked their glittering garniture in gladder green.

II.

The heavenward firs were whispering health and hope,
The tasseled birch, the oak and the proud pines
Were gaily boasting their ethereal scope,
Oblivious of aught that undermines;
But I had walked beneath, and traced the lines
Of ominous decay in moss-wreathed forms
Upright, and prostrate trunks around sent signs
Of forked bolts hurled, and shattering storms,—
Of fated death to all which life or verdure warms.

III.

Alas, my motherland, how the far eye
Doth rove enchanted o'er thy flaunting pride!
How the wild praise of swift prosperity
Resounds from patriot votaries loud and wide!
How thy exuberant beauties have defied
The stranger-critic's scrutinizing ken!
But on thy breast have cherishing children sighed,
To see thy robur sapped by subtle bane,
And pristine charms fast fading ne'er to bloom again.

IV.

Yet as the Prairie-bud, that shrinks and furls
The petalled ensign at the noontide heats,
Its vermeil-tinted symmetries outcurls
When dewy morn invites the slumbering sweets,
Or as the elm, when round the home-retreats
Wan autumn moans, doth rustle sere and dead,
But soon as April's balmy breathing greets,
Rewakes to youth and decks its draperied head,
So stand thy silent glories—not forever fled.

V.

For many a priceless boon lies unrevealed
'Mid the mutations of progressive Art,
And germs of good the jealous Past hath sealed,
Abide their time their joyance to impart;
And mercy in the millions' heaving heart
Her living leav'n hides from the common ken,
Till forth from Ruin's chaos-verge shall start
The note of knell to mad and miscreant men—
The Jubilee to Thraldom's aching denizen.

VI.

There be — Heaven sees them, — souls still sternly set
To breast the blast would wake destruction dire —
The insidious creeping pestilence: not yet
On Freedom's altars fades the flickering fire,
Though in her sacred fane with Hell-born ire,
Did beings badged with lash and bloodhound stand:
The light from Truth's own torch shall not expire
While Myrtro lives a legate of the land,
Or Woman waits around the unwearied vestal band.

VII.

Not as when once the living torches lit
The gorgeous garden of the fiend of Eld,[1]
Nor when, a god, the demon prince would sit,[2]
And Rome again in reeking crimson swelled,
Ne when mad Priestcraft Mary's reign upheld,[3]
And Gallia's Charles his hand to butchery lent —[4]
Not now as then is Myrtro's mission knelled,
Or Error's bloody laurels shorn and shent, —
Yet self-devotion saves the sunset continent.

VIII.

I saw him when a tried and weary few
Stood glad with tidings at his Larean seat;
His stately brow did meekly pale its hue,
Ingenuous grace their gratulations greet,
And joy meet joy o'er shamed Intrigue's defeat;
But awed he heard that Providence would lay
The fates, perchance, of millions at his feet,
And faltering could the chosen voice but say,
'Speak, Thou great Guide, Thy servant heareth to obey.'

IX.

And then I watched him as he walked within
The wildering Babel still named 'Washington'—
A fair of Vanity, whose Bedlam-din
'T were treason in a pilgrim's ears to shun—
Where pompous prizes for a day are won,
And souls unsullied—'white'—forever sold:
And Myrtro's course, like mariner's voyage begun
'Twixt Scylla and Charibdis' rocks, must hold
Where foamed fanatic rage, or ruffian Maelstroms rolled.

X.

Anon, aloof the multitude he turned,
And earnest mid a gathered group he sate;
Calm conference theirs, but in each bosom burned
A fire would mould the morrow's deep debate—
The scheme, the high resolve, whose workings
'wait,
Beyond the self-wrung heart-throes of its birth,
The blest revealings of impartial Fate:
And the bright hope-shrine of a distant hearth
Shall blush not when his sire hath seen 'the last
of earth.'

XI.

Aye, when Futurity hath changed to Now,
And the fair Present faded in the Past,
The idoled imageries, to which men bow
And shut their eyes, are back to Nothing cast;
The treasure-freights Delusion hath amassed,
And self-full toils, that fondling favorites doat
To fix in Fame, Oblivion seizes fast,
And Earth's reserve-hosts know but deeds that note
The dauntless heart to Duty loyal and devote.

XII.

Again I sought him, 'neath the blazoned dome
Where Freedom holds her Delphic haunt, though foes
Had stolen her prophets' livery, and her home
Invaded, — where might sister realms disclose
Their Heaven-won weal and half their self-won woes,
But oft Alleviation's voice was quenched,—
There mid the pillared pageantry he rose,
And fronted with majestic mien unblenched,
The haught and spite that cowered and lurked in frowns intrenched.

XIII.

A stranger there, but known — a light ne'er hid,
For subtly doth the demoned nature see
The presence of meek Virtue, and unbid
Bends to her silent sway the trembling knee.
As guilty Premonition's craven plea
And the grim tenant of wild Gadara's glooms
Met Him from o'er the wave of Galilee,
So yet to unobtrusive Goodness comes
The aggressive scoffer's truce that Sin's defeat foredooms.

XIV.

Seek not the word-winged periods of his speech;
The theme that prompts the surcharged breast divined,
Deem all revealed the ingenuous tongue would teach:
The 'question'—'twas the e'er failing search to find
True Policy from Honesty disjoined,
The insuperable *whether* Might makes Right:
The panorama of a patriot mind,
Where History limns her shifting shade and light,
Is Reason's only enginery in such a fight.

XV.

So he unbosomed to the listening States
The Present's thronging sequences, and bade
The Past stand sybil to the Future's fates,—
Up from old Carthage sacked and smouldering, made
The star of Rome a meteor flash and fade,
Or toil-doomed minions blast Athena's peace,—[5]
So off the o'ergrasping hand of Power he laid
The specious guise of demagogue finesse,
And bared its blows to Heaven's retributive redress.

XVI.

Anon, did Aphro bristle forth and bark—
A self-sold Lucifer of Place and Gain—
As restively did doomed Ambition mark
The tottering air-towers of his mad-cap brain:
Out belched his batteries of Words amain,
Or fawned betimes the fopling fool's grimace,
And, aping Wit, forth sneaked the jest profane,
Till, emptying all his emptiness apace,
Approval leered from every factious claquer's face.

XVII.

Aspiring Zesto, ('tis for thee I write,
Thou weak but strong, thou timorous but brave,
Peace-born, but foreordained to Freedom's fight,)
How dost thou list that hoary headed knave?
Canst ken between to reason and to rave?
Dost dare to *think*, and having thought, to do?
Then let no friend-like words thy will deprave,
Though first in gilded haunt old Aphro knew
To hush thy vote-response, or turn it from the true.

XVIII.

I heard his whispers as behind yon screen,
He proffered thee to 'smile' and Care dispel,
And o'er that draught he searched thy soul, I ween,
And told—Fie, what his flippant *tongue* may tell!—
His 'way' to 'Honor'; 'twere *thy* way to Hell,
(If e'er such hearth for homeless Flattery glows.)
Then must thou bid the laurel bough farewell?
Nay, Honor is the Gratitude that grows
Spontaneous from the Blessing, not the Curse, man sows.

XIX.

Beware, young Zesto, deem not Honor 'Fame,'
Albeit thou cravest to survive dire Death;
Call Glory not the fickle crowd's acclaim,
Nor splendors fading with each fleeting breath.
From Fashion's falsities to simple Faith,
Retire beside Potomac's peaceful wave,
And sit awhile with me anear this wreath
Of rose-vines that the ripples love to lave,
And list an orphan's lay, and look upon yon grave.

XX.

The zephyr's whisper 'mong the aged trees,
The rippling rill in deep sequestered dell,
The wild-bird's carol wafted on the breeze,
The hum Hymettan in the blossom's bell,
The battling clouds awaked by thunder-knell,
The moanings of the distant hurricane —
Each minstrelsy hath tranced thee in its spell;
But *her* lone rhapsode shall thy soul retain,
As doth the shell the music of the sounding Main:

1.

'Roam as ye may to find Delight
Amid the bowers of Beauty,
Or work by day and watch by night
At the sceptre-beck of Duty,
The soul will turn from the riches reft
In passing Death's dire portal,
And fondliest yearn for some sweets left
Enlinked with THE IMMORTAL.

2.

'In star-lit space ye proudly pause
The rapt and reveling Reason,
And subtly trace the mystic laws
That guide each circling season;
But when ye seem by visioned sight
To have searched and known the Eternal,
'T is but a gleam of the golden light
That glads THE POWERS SUPERNAL.

3.

'The dulcet symphonies ye hear
In grove or grot resounding,
The brooklet's hymn, the carol clear,
Sweet Echo's voices bounding,
The melody of human tongue,—
All harmonies terrestrial,
Are but the prelude of the song
Of CHORISTERS CELESTIAL.

4.

'The fairy form that flits in grace
Through festive hall resplendent,
The witching charm of Woman's face,
With rose-tint wreath transcendent,
Age shall transmute, the spell be o'er,
And dimmed be the bright eye's flashes,
As the fabled fruit of the Dead-sea shore,
In the pilgrim's grasp is ashes.

5.

'But the sunny cheer of Virtue meek
That shines through the spirit-keeper,
Though Time may sere and blanch the cheek,
Shall lovelier glow, and deeper:
Aye, the mind may woo, and the heart may cull
An Eden fading never,
For the High, the True, the Beautiful,
Are wed to the soul FOREVER.'

XXI.

My raptured Zesto, roves thy pensive eye
To rest on yon lithe crimpling rushes there?
What Fancy-dream doth lure thee to pass by
A sound so sweet, a maiden form so fair?
Aye, learn thy statesman-lesson everywhere!
See in that sedgy tuft thy mirrored life
Bend at behest of each light puff of air;
But let yon mountain-rooted oak be rife
In emblems of thy soul through future storm and strife.

XXII.

And here, from anarch bickerings retired,
In Contemplation's Reason-loyal mood,
With sweetened sympathies thy bosom fired,
Begone lean Prejudice's rampant brood,
Whilst thou revert where Shenandoah's flood
These waters kiss: with pale Virginia learn
A lesson writ in lines of fire and blood:
Vain would the rock-piled Ridge their twin course turn;
As vain would Heaven-high Wrong the onward Rights inurn.

XXIII.

There stood a man of roughly Time-scarred brow,
His scattered locks with hoary rime besprent,
A lip all nerved as 'neath some speechless vow,
A kindly eye, but flashing stern intent:
No trace was Fear, though thick around were sent
The viewless Death-shafts, and his little band
Were fallen pierced and bleeding by. What meant
The fierce affray, the throng on every hand
Swift weaponing at the sudden note of shrill command?

XXIV.

Along the lapse of Toil-marked seasons flown,
That veteran's heart had Sorrow's keenness felt,
Till now Bereavement claimed it as her own,
And made it at each brother's anguish melt:
The brave and beauteous ones that fondly knelt
His hearth-shrine round, and proudly called him sire,
Had sunk 'neath wanton blows by Ruffians dealt;
Behind the smiting hand, a Power more dire
Uprose, and roused within his breast a quenchless fire.

XXV.

A fire not fell Retaliation's flame,
Though fed by Indignations heaped and hot,
As ever to his ear wild tidings came
Of horrors by that Gorgon power begot.
Albeit Fiction's tales, he could not blot
Their fatal seal from his o'ermemoried brain,
And in the impress, his life-missioned lot
A spectral finger painted forth, mid pain
And perils, Perseus-like, the ravage to restrain.

XXVI.

E'en when to *thee* those phantasm-tales, forsooth,
The tattling breeze from Southron homes hath borne,
They seemed of Mythland, yet of mourning Truth—
From bursting breasts the infant's love-smile torn,
Young wedded hearts forever made forlorn,
Sweet girlhood shrinking o'er the verge of fate,
And manhood left, through robbery, stripes and scorn,
A branded thing below the brute's estate,—
A reptiled wretch of falsehood, fear and venom hate.

XXVII.

Judge mildly then, the old man's wild belief,
"Chide but the means and not the righteous end;"
Thou canst not ken the alembic power of Grief,
Nor wily Fancy that betimes doth bend
Before proud Reason like a smooth-tongued friend,
And creep apace on her unguarded throne;
Then, all of Wisdom's years may not forefend
That mad hallucination's spell alone;—
His Thought no death-plot for the monster nursed, save one:

XXVIII.

And that, this crazy crusade: thence the crowd
Of pallid 'Chivalry' rushing breathless round:
Thence came, anon, a living corse low bowed
In captive thongs, and slashed with many a wound:
Peace-loving sages' laws could not o'ersound
The e'erclamoring whisper in his errant soul,
"Remember those in bonds as with them bound:"
And thence another name in Crime's black scroll,—[6]
The grim foe is his judge, the gibbet is his goal.

XXIX.

The goal of Now: the Future shall remand
His case against the Slave-power's iron heel;
For not alone in the far Spirit-land
Hath Earth a grand Hereafter of appeal:
Posterity hies hither with a seal
That stamps approved no law save Love's: her trump
Shall sound accordant with the archangel's peal:
Her Truth-line shall yon sophist ne'er o'erjump—
The little sovereign of the demagogic stump.

XXX.

Come, hie away to weary Myrtro's side,
And stand the struggle of to-night sublime!
Toil for the boons that 'yond the Death-hour bide,
Nor heed old Aphro groveling in grime.
What if thou fall? there yet must come a time,
Though ages lapse, when men shall yield the meed
Of Truth to merit that was misnamed crime:
Then Maynard-like, though blazing perils plead,
Guide on the flame-beleaguered helm till spirit-freed.[7]

XXXI.

I will not charge thee, Zesto, fling away
The high ambition that our Myrtro fires,
Nor all the 'meat that perisheth' gainsay,
When Aphro's 'loaves and fishes' wake desires:
Kind Heaven's promise the meek soul inspires,—
It shall inherit many sweets of Earth,
Though oft it droops, and oft tried Virtue tires:
Review with me a tale of patriot worth,
Yet own that Wrong must reap but Desolation's dearth.

XXXII.

Around the peak that shoots its form on high
From sad Helena's lone and rugged rock,
The awful Storm-king of the wide-realmed sky
Had wrapped his thunder-clouds, and he did mock
The prisoned sunbeams, and the surging shock
Of Ocean struggling to unmine his throne:
He waved his sable sceptre forth, he spoke,
And, from Æolian caves from zone to zone,
His rushing legions meet, and their dread sovereign own:

XXXIII.

'Ye spirits of the whirlwind, list and quail!
Down where yon smoke-wreath slowly upward curled,
Reveals immortal Longwood's slumbering vale,
I've spied grim Death with hurrying wing unfurled:
He seeks the exiled earthling, who hath hurled
Defiance oft at all your mingled might,—
He at whose thunders bowed the startled world,
Despising mine, e'en on the Alpine height:
Burst then in revels round your rival's head to-night!'

XXXIV.

The tempest furies boom their hoarse reply,
And from his hand the crinkling lightnings flash—
The black clouds muster and empall the sky,
As peals the thunder's simultaneous crash—
Wide o'er the isle engulphing torrents dash—
The ledge-bound trees from their foundations leap,
The groaning shore the battling billows lash—
And out from Neptune's halls of crystal creep
The scouting sprites that scourge with besom fierce the Deep.

XXXV.

And long the wild tornado raged around
The prison-cottage where the crownless chief
Lay silent listening the sepulchral sound.
In vain within, Affection's gushing grief
Bade his brave spirit seek some sweet relief
From the deep-harrowing canker in his breast:
He lent his burning brain to reverie brief—
Yon picturèd boy his glazing eye possessed—
And quivering his pale lips, 'MY SON,' he sunk to rest.

XXXVI.

To rest? Ah, no; a thousand memories sprung
Forth from the weird enchantment of that word;
The threshold bell of his rapt soul was rung,
The penetralia of the heart were stirred,
And long-tombed hopes were fondly disinterred;
'Mine idol son! shall I still live in thee?
Hath yet thine ear thy father's sorrows heard?
Wilt drop his fate a tear? and one day be
To sweet Ambition's myriad streams, the merging sea?'

XXXVII.

Beside the bud that decked the mantle-wall
In beauty hung 'proud Austria's mournful flower;'
Oft would the penciled loveliness recall
Sweet reminiscence of the day of Power;
But sad he gazed in Death's tribunal-hour,
For kingcraft's hymeneal stratagem
Made e'en Love's raptured memories chill and sour,
Yet fain his hand would clasp the distant gem,
For now ''t were more than worth his vanished diadem.'

XXXVIII.

Would that the mind were monarch of its dreams!
But 'tis Association's chain-bound slave,
And oft, when solemn Reason's piercing gleams
A guilty wretch would resolutely brave,
Stern Conscience will her iron sceptre wave.
Yes, lingering one, pursue the theme, nor screen
That smile, that tell-tale tear, till in the grave!
Mute are thy lips, yet moves thy heart, I ween,
Around that word of bitter solace—JOSEPHINE.

XXXIX.

An unseen seraph hovers o'er thy bed—
A silver cadence echos in thine ear—
A soft hand sweetly soothes thine aching head—
A soul-subduing eye beams fond and clear—
The halo of thy brightest day is here:
But treacherous Fancy shifts the visioned scene—
That pure eye's brilliance brooks a tremulous tear,
As wedded love bodes lightning in thy mien,—
The fierce bolt falls, and France hath lost her guardian queen.

XL.

Hushed now is his protecting angel's voice,
Set is the star of Destiny—his boast,
And he is left to wail the self-willed choice,
When Love's fair guiding star is spurned and lost.
As the wrecked mariner on hostile coast,
Who steered presumptuous o'er a luring sea,
Looks back where late the breakers yawned and tossed,
So tugs he now bleak Russia's wreck to flee,
Or writhes 'neath England's philanthropic villainy.

XLI.

Anon, delirious frenzy fires his eye
As madder bursts the clattering hurricane;
Though morn reveals a black and rayless sky,
The 'sun of Austerlitz' shines once again—
Proud marshaled splendors overspread the plain—
At his behest the bristling squadrons pour—
Far files the foe's interminable train—
'Charge, charge, brave Soult!'—they waver—victory's sure—
And Pratzen's reeling heights reëcho, 'Vive l' Empereur!'

XLII.

Read the response and see his triumph-smile,
As heaves his breast the heart-throb—'Tete d' armeè!'
Aye to that Head and to that Army, vile
The envious hosts of Europe's leagued array!
Anon, gray-headed marshals hail his sway—
The chosen Guards his eagle ensigns wave—
Recedes afar the tossing plume of Ney—
The thundering shock those steel-fringed squares outbrave—
'Tis Bleucher comes—Oh! Grouchy—God the veterans save!

XLIII.

What throes! they tear his mighty soul away:
How strain the sinews of that iron frame,
Like the pierced lion's, ere relaxed for aye!
Hush! bend and catch the heart's last whispered name,
Ere lock those lips their treasures: is it Fame?
No, Truth shall shame the slander Scotia saith:
'Tis FRANCE relights the flickering vital flame—
To France he consecrates his latest breath—
No more those orbs flash fire—Napoleon sleeps in Death.

XLIV.

But few the years ere Adda's wisp-wild swamp
And Bernard's bleaky crags were paradised;
The blazonry of proud embattled pomp,
That once the world to wildering wars enticed,
No more fond History's questioning sufficed;
The shrine was Mars' but 'twas a patriot's vow,
Though Error oft his native heart o'ericed;
And contrite Albion smoothes her jealous brow,
And grateful France rethrones him in her bosom now.

XLV.

Yea, Zesto, greater were his faults than thine,
For littleness his nature never knew;
But as in wastes of weeds doth lovelier shine
The lonely flower of Lustre's milder hue,
So gleamed the patriot o'er the conqueror's view.
Be all *thy* wrong from right impulses riven,
And Myrtro's golden line of light pursue!
To thee more bright a martyr-crown be given
Than his, who dying, fain had passed by France to Heaven.

XLVI.

Deem not alone the high insignia set
Where crimsoned cross or smouldering stake doth rise;
Hath e'er Humanity's arch coronet
Tiaraed the bright beings of the skies?
For Earth and Manhood shines the sacred prize,—
Though Atropos clip *soft* the silver thread
Whose twirling pulse from Clotho's distaff hies,—
Where'er to Right stands Life's martyrion wed—
Where'er for truth the thorn-stung brow of Thought hath bled.

XLVII.

Back to thy shore, saint-haunted isle, I turn,
For now pale Death forbade the Storm-king rave,
And Sunset smiled from Hesper's golden urn,
And lulled to sleep the woodland and the wave:
Yon spell-bound sail would find in thee a grave
For her within, who sinketh with the sun.[8]
Soul-wrenching agony! it cannot save
His lone and longing heart the treasure. Done
Is the war of Life—her crown of Life is won.

XLVIII.

Gray islet, bid the watch-worn one rejoice,
As Morn in beauty beams athwart the Brine;
When his lorn babes bemoan the mother's voice,
And whelmed in woe his palsied soul would pine,
Then whisper of the brighter morn than thine,
That breaks to her who kenned her Master's call;
Aye, 'Rock of Ocean,' her meek form enshrine,
As hath the 'Rock of Ages' held her all,
Since erst, the heir of ease, she served the heirs
of Thrall.

XLIX.

All manful is the bosom brave that bleeds
To shield its birthland,—that all patient hears
The applause of onward centuries, nor heeds
The doleful tramp of weary marching years:
But all Divine the breast that perseveres,
In stranger climes from home-loved haunts away,
To work the weal of worlds,—that fain the cheers,
Which bead Life's chalice-brim, resigns for aye,
To drink its gall-dregs, and an ingrate's woes allay.

L.

Aye, burned a spark of Deity within
The lone old sage that kenned the Eternal Word,
And o'er the poison-beaker smiled serene:
How soon repentant Attica deplored!
But 'Christian' States have left a patriot lord
"Without a pitying eye to weep his fall,
Or friendly hand his struggle to record:"
Metamcet *now* the trespassers recall,
And poor Miantonomo's wrongs his foes appal.

LI.

Then, Zesto, graced with Culture's beauty, spurn
No longer Nature's rudely tutored child,
And, reasoning not by cramping scribe-rule, learn
The glories of the warriors of the Wild:
Go sit where once their dark-eyed daughters smiled,
Or circled graver sires in council state,
And list the legends that the night beguiled!
List older Heathendom a tale relate,
And thou shalt comprehend brave Myrtro's morrow fate.

LII.

'T was midnight, and the seven-hilled city slept:[9]
Hushed were her streets as if by spell Divine:
High on her battlements, the watchman kept
His earnest vigil o'er each ancient shrine.
Above the brow of templed Aventine,
Smiled sweetly down the Firmamental queen,
And sinking, sent her softest beam benign
To kiss far-dimpling Tiber's cheek serene,
And bid his ripples not disturb the slumbering scene.

LIII.

In lulling whispers moaned a mellow breeze
Through columned courts and stately arches gray:
Low music murmured down the aged trees
That bent their boughs above the Sacred Way,—
Was it the wind among the leaves at play?
Draw near and list! the lyre's enchanting note
Falls on the ear, and then a liquid lay
Swells softly out, and magic echoes float
From Capitòline's crest to answering hills remote:

1.

'Darkness mantleth round —
Luna's light is waning —
Hushed the Nightingale's sound —
Solemn silence reigning:
Lyra, awake thee, and bring
To Loneliness solacing pleasure!
Lyra, awake while I sing —
Curtius is Rome's richest treasure.

2.

'Anxious my heart's throbbings are —
Slumber mine eyelids forsaketh —
Wander my musings afar,
Where the loud larum awaketh:
Patriot battalions are there —
Warriors prized beyond measure —
But none with my hero compare —
Curtius is Rome's richest treasure.

3.

'Where the Foe's column divides,
See I his snowy plume waving —
His the winged charger that guides —
Dream I the death he is braving:
Guard, Jove, his bark o'er the seas!
Grant us one greeting's glad pleasure!
Bravest of brave Equites —
Curtius is Rome's richest treasure.'

LIV.

The Via's friendly poplars quivered o'er
A youthful warrior's outline half reclined,—
The Capitol's proud pillars rose before,
The Rostra's brazen trophies gleamed behind,—
Dimly the hushed Basilicae defined
The Forum's limits,—but anear him stood
A pile of dusky splendors,—and his mind,
Oblivious else, the vine-loved lattice viewed,
And thus response awoke the listening solitude:

1.

'Nay, *Treasure*, whose melody greeting,
Falls sweetly as erst on the ear,
As wildly the pulses are beating,
That thrill when but angels are near:
Ere the mists of the Morn are retreating,
The wand'rer unchanged wilt thou see,
And Aurora shall smile on our meeting,—
I live for my country and thee.

2.

'O long hath his bosom been burning,
When marches and bivouacs be o'er,
From battle and conquest returning,
To rest on Italia's shore:
O fondly hath Fancy been yearning
The fair mother-city to see,
For naught hath his spirit been learning
To love, but his country and thee.

3.

'O blest be the tie that hath bound him
To the fanes that his forefathers reared —
Thrice blest, if where Danger hath found him,
Their patriot tongue was revered —
Thrice welcome above and around him
The shrines that his sword shall keep free,
Till the bays of the martyr have crowned him
Who lives for his country and thee.

4.

'I am come, I am come,—yet is gleaming
Thy star o'er yon dome as before,
When, watched by its silver ray streaming,
We plighted the pure vow of yore:
An idol is wove in my dreaming,
And o'er a wild spirit and free
The light of Devotion is beaming,—
I live for my country and thee.'

LV.

Hushed was the hero's song, save in one heart
Accordant symphonies ceased not to trill,—
As ripples on the lakelet's margin part,
So swept its echoes in each throbbing thrill:
The lips of listening love were sealed and still,
Tranced in the spell of Hope's Elysian dream,—
The moon had sunk behind the phantomed hill,
Darkness her ebon sceptre swayed supreme,
And all was black and dead as Lethe's sullen stream.

LVI.

Ye gods who guard old Roma's triumph-palm,
Lend ye not one foreboding presage o'er
The tingling silence of the treacherous calm?
Rolls on the ear, like Ocean's distant roar,
A hollow murmur. Suddenly doth pour
A muttering jar along the struggling ground.
Burst booming thunders through earth's deepest core.
Foundations adamantine heave and bound.
Walls toss and totter; Desolation reigns around.

LVII.

There mute amid the scene lone Curtius stood,—
A scene in dismal mystery dark and dread:
So through the depths of Switzer solitude,
The wondering wanderer moves with cautious tread,
But from the beetling verge high overhead,
In subtle poise depends an ice-pile small;
If Echo touch, an avalanche 'tis spread,—
He hears, he starts, he hies to flee the fall
Of mountain masses, bounding, bursting, burying all.

LVIII.

The grey of Twilight shimmered once again,
And soothing Morn, slow brightening, sadly smiled.
The Eternal City stood: her grandeur then
Looked proudly o'er the wrecks of ruin piled,
As towers the sent'nel mast sublimely mild,
Of some brave bark the hurricane hath torn.
A living mass in consternation wild,
Rolled through her streets by restless impulse borne,
Or mourned mid monarch pillars standing lone and lorn.

LIX.

Bewildered multitudes commingling press
Around the Forum's venerated space.
Back, hurrying feet! Yawns dark and fathomless
A hideous chasm along the mystic place.
O Jove Supreme! what human ken shall trace
The woes that in thy wise decrees await
The hapless sons of Romulus' high race?
Hath Rome relentless wronged a vanquished state,
Or owned above thy shrines thy victor hand too late?

LX.

And men gazed wild the abysmal horrors in,
As if a nation's sepulchre were there,—
When quick throughout is hushed the circling din,
And on the verge a hoary band appear.
The impatient multitude lends anxious ear
To hierophants of Heaven's mysteries:
'Rome, Lo! the rites are done; Jove's judgment hear!
These crater jaws await a sacrifice:
They ne'er shall shut but o'er the State's most precious prize.'

LXI.

The soothsayers cease: the gods reveal no more.
Who, who, Rome's richest treasure shall declare?
The jeweled stores from India's pearl-paved shore—
The rainbow robes sweet Cashmere's vallies wear—
The trophied pride triumphal chariots bear—
The Parian form that speaks by Phidias' art—
Or yonder Hill's stupendous fabric fair—
What sage shall cull, what wisdom shall impart
The choicest sacrifice of Rome's imperial heart?

LXII.

O labyrinth of doubts — Doom's dread suspense!
Ye fluttering thousands fleetly glides the day!
But hark! a shout relieves the straining sense—
Quick through the crowd is cleft a willing way—
A stately steed in tasseled trappings gay,
Careers along beneath a steel-clad knight,
And pauses by the brink in proud survey.
Not Curtius quailed in sympathetic fright,
But o'er the wondering throng sent arrowy words of might.

LXIII.

'Romans! whose breasts beat proudly at the name,—
Patriots, whose heart-strings intertwine the state,—
Fathers, whose deeds bequeath the deathless fame—
Mothers, whose hands decide our birthland's fate,—
Say, wherefore trembling longer hesitate?
Know ye not yet the highest gift to Rome?
Then marvel not unknowing and ingrate,
That Jove unlocks the omen of your doom,
With such sole talisman above the threat'ning tomb.

LXIV.

'Not years of luxury, endless though their length,
A nation's being can immortalize;
Not high raised battlement of siegeless strength,
The palaced peace of princes fortifies;
Not glory's brilliancy concentred lies
In gorgeous dome or golden relics gay;
Not Sculpture's tongueless eloquence supplies
The loftiest boon that glads your boast to-day:
Rome shrines a jewel dropped from Heaven: she must repay.

LXV.

'For Immortality, Power, Splendor, Fame,
All, all, alone from patriot valor spring:
Thou, my fair fatherland, say, canst thou claim
Than Virtue's robur a sublimer thing?
This thine, through realms remote thy praises ring, —
This lost, the nations list thy funeral knell:
Behold the symboled sacrifice I bring!
Whene'er did Death or Danger Curtius quell?
Receive me, Jove! Loved Rome, sweet country, fare thee well!'

LXVI.

Low bent the knight,—one whisper and one kiss
To Beauty smiling through her tears before,—
He waved his glistening helmet toward the abyss—
The battle-charger onward bounded o'er—
The snow-plume fades in darkness—the hoarse roar
Of shivering shocks reverberates along—
The Forum heaves—the chaos yawns no more.
Forth from amid the attendant virgin throng,
A voice Elysium-echoed, raised the requiem song:

1.

'To Jove be my TREASURE—to Jove be our martyr!
A nation too late her deliverance knows;
But ne'er shall thy name in Oblivion depart her,
Though deep in Earth's darkness thine ashes repose.

2.

'A Star from its kindred celestials descended,
From Error it lighted, to Glory it flamed;
The radiance remains, but its mission is ended,
For spirits Supernal the wanderer claimed.

3.

'When dangers and tempests shall gather before us,
And patriots assemble in anxious debate,
Thy words from the Rostra shall reëcho o'er us,
And heroes rise forth to deliver the state.

4.

'Farewell to thee, Curtius, the gods emulating,—
Sweet, sweet be the joys of thy Deified rest!
Not Hermes' or Charon's slow guidance awaiting,
Thy spirit hath flown to the Isles of the Blest.'

LXVII.

Alas, impetuous Will, that might not wait
To tomb adeep the far woes yet to be,—
To watch the slow, sure steps of torturing Fate,
And bide the beck of Mutability,—
Haled o'er the unremaining brink, to see
The Goth, the Gaul, the blood-born Purple's pride,
And the long line of Mitred Villainy!
How had fair 'Ginia lived, how ne'er had died
Sweet Beatrice, Heav'n extenuated parricide!

LXVIII.

We may not know how many a golden glimpse
  Of Truth and all-right Nature blessed the eyes
Of Roma's patriots, while the busy imps
  Of smokeful creeds and warping Bias rise
  To blurr our own with 'motes' of timber-size.
O for the Book and Fane primeval, wove
  Of boughs and blooms and solemn traceries
And birdling cradles and wide-murmured love
And gleams o' th' all-endiademing skies above!

LXIX.

Betimes methinks the Supreme One hath smiled
  Compassionate approval on the scene
Where'er a weak and darkly wildered child
  Hath sought the Sire celestial and terrene,
  And awe-rapt, paused with reverential mien
At Nature's limitless beneficence,
  Or kenned o'er human strifes a Judge serene:
Recked not, I ween, the all-just, good Providence—
'Yahouh,' 'Jove,' or 'God'—the titles' difference.[10]

LXX.

The 'Is'—the 'Essence of the Universe'—
The 'Uncreate'—'Creator'—'Origin and End'—
The 'Cosmos'—'Harmony'—'Love'—'Anti-curse'—
The subtile Good we dimly comprehend—
To this, within us and without, we bend
Our yearning spirits by innate behest:[11]
Fools! o'er a *word* to slaughter and contend,
While mother Earth makes bare her beauteous breast,
That all may draw its drainless sweets, or peaceful rest.

LXXI.

The morrow is a' coming evermore,
But ne'er arrives to Zesto's burning breast;
Still fondly strain our blind eyes to explore,
Along its wisp-lit shore, a hav'n of rest:
Still flutter forth our white-winged hopes in quest
Of some sweet olive-sign of Heav'n-loved land,
But few flock back, like Noah's wanderer blest;
They dim away before some upstart wand,
And die, and weary droops our vain outreaching hand.

LXXII.

The Morrow comes and opens wide the pit
That underlies the race-goal of To-day,
Where, bristling Pythoness, the Past would sit,
And warn of Death, Disaster and Dismay:
We press for our chimeras, nor survey
As the sole Judges' stand her Tripod-throne,—
Anon, delusive Pleasure's verge gives way,
And blanched and wild for Curtius' help we moan:
The hoary hierophant hath Myrtro heard alone?

LXXIII.

When Morrow comes and Myrtro is no more,
Shall Freedom live and bend above his bier?
Shall Mercy smile or flinty foe deplore,
And meek Religion wipe the falling tear?
Will Zesto forth, unknowing frown or fear
As on thy soul a prophet-mantle fell?
So Wrath's barbarian front ne'er know thee veer
From whither Duty's high behests impel,
All Earth and Heaven shall say: 'Good, faithful servant, WELL!'

LXXIV.

When bright above the summits of the west,
The god of gladness lingers to survey
The radiant realm his yearning beams have blest,
The billowy clouds in liveried array
Glide o'er the goldening azuredom of Day,
Like courtiers round their king, and send anew
His farewell smile o'er vale and hillside gay,
And Nature, hushed and spell-bound at the view,
In breathless reverence bids her parting lord adieu.

LXXV.

As Twilight leaves the lonesome landscape dim,
Thus oft hath reasoned Childhood's fancy-dream:
'Should some fair clime beyond the mountain-brim,
Allure the sun to shine but there supreme,
And nevermore shed here the rosy beam,
Alas, how changed, how cheerless and how chill!
Though Luna lend her pale and tremulous gleam,
No beauty would enchant, no joyance thrill,
And Life, in universal, living Death, stand still.'

LXXVI.

Alas, fair Greece, that this hath been thy fate!
The sun of Science shines not on thy shore,
Sweet Academus' shrine is desolate,
Athena wakes to eloquence no more;
Westward the mourning Adriatic o'er,
Thy glory fled. But not bright Italy
Could chain to triumph-pomp the trust she tore;
The disenchanted orb rose far and free,
And lingers but to light another land like thee.

LXXVII.

Say, son of this Hesperidean clime,
Shall proud Britannia boast her isle alone
Enshrines Cecropia's chivalry sublime? —
Vaunt that the fire of glittering ages gone,
Is transmigrated spirit — all her own?
No! if in freed America there be
To charm the hovering halo ere 'tis flown, —
If thou from Eld learn well the mystery
Which hallowed Sparta's homes, and bleak Thermopylæ.

LXXVIII.

What impulse prompted, O immortal Greece!
When forth to conquest thy brave armies sped?
What sceptre staid thy liberties and peace,
And made thy sons the heights of Glory tread?
A mystic-power, a Gunjah-spell was shed
Upon thy youths from legendary time,
As Fancy wove her myths of mighty Dead—
The guardian Genii of thy sacred clime,
And Truth, mid Fiction's fairy train, gleamed forth sublime.

LXXIX.

To lure the soul unlent Religion's light
Through Virtue's narrow, rugged pathway on,
And send thy rising heroes magic might
The subtle wiles of Pleasure's voice to shun,
Jove gave to thee a glorious paragon,
In him who, doomed by Juno's haughty hate,
Left not Euristheus' miracles undone,—
Defied the cruel league of hostile Fate,
And taught thy chiefs to throne thee greatest of the great.

LXXX.

To burning Zesto then, thy Sage's tale:— [12]
  The portal passed that sternly shuts behind
The puerile pastimes of Youth's sunny vale,
  And wide unfolds before the buoyant mind,
  Like chequered charts in specious dyes defined,
The joys and ills o'er Manhood's field of strife,—
  When stepdame Reason first begins to bind
The truant thoughts with rage and rashness rife,
And tasks them to the enigma of a happy life,—

LXXXI.

The Mœræ-crisis — then young Herakles
  Hied from his home and sought the sylvan shade,
The mossy bank beneath embowering trees,
  Where Care's obtrusive foot might not invade
  The reverie deep that o'er his spirit strayed.
Knit was that brow marmorean, till the boy
  Unhid a Thought-whirled brain, and lowly prayed:
'Eternal Jove, thy sovereign aid employ,
And point thy child the pathway of perennial joy.

LXXXII.

'Meanders by my feet a stealthy stream,
Whose waters smile and sparkle, gliding on,
They know not whither. Here, perchance, a gleam
Of sunshine lights their dimples, but anon,
The cataract's craggy brink they rush upon —
Whirl, break, and tumble to the abyss below,
Then foam on till in Ocean gulphed and gone.
Oh! is *Life's* stream forever doomed to flow,
Alternate flung 'twixt bowers of Bliss and wilds of Woe?'

LXXXIII.

So murmured the lone youth, when to his side,
As still and swift as silvery ripples change,
Two snowy forms like faery phantoms glide.
Than one, no being, found in Fancy's range,
More charming stood in beauty sweet and strange;
Her soul, locked in the lustre of her eye,
Stern sceptre swayed to Malice and Revenge,
But waved the winsome wand of sympathy,
Should Meekness seek a shield, or Suffering heave a sigh.

LXXXIV.

Of other mould the attendant wanderer stood.
Not hers the charm celestial and serene,—
Expression's fire and Eloquence ne'er woed,
And wily Art was all alert to screen,
By studied bearing and affected mien,
The reft soul-beauty Nature doth deny
When pampered Luxury holds insatiate reign ;
Yet wore her look a wanton witchery,
So smooth her cherry cheek and soft her subtle eye.

LXXXV.

Instant she hies the hero to salute,
Ere rival arts the stranger should employ,
Who earnest watched behind, but lingered mute.
Now flits upon his ear her flatteries coy :
'Long have I known thee, bright and beauteous boy—
Witnessed the doubts that rack thy wavering mind—
Have seen thy soul's insatiate search for joy,
And 'wept the wiles which made thee fail to find.
But list my counsel! Fate shall be no more unkind.

LXXXVI.

'Fear not! how shall Misfortune's deadning dart
Dare strike the god-protected Herakles?
Let others sow the fruits decreed thine heart,
For 't is not Life to live and not in ease.
Wait not till flown thee, gay Delight to seize,
But let my flowery realm thy bosom cheer,
Where nectared sweets shall scent the balmy breeze,
Where Toil or Want thy spirit ne'er shall fear,
But Beauty charm thine eye, and Melody thine ear.'

LXXXVII.

With stately step and sternly changeless mien,
The listening lingerer hurries her advance;
Lo! as she glides with guileless grace between,
The Pleasure-siren shrinks from 'neath her glance,
But some strange spirit seemeth to entrance
The wondering boy mute gazing on her form,
For falling sweet as seraph's utterance,
Her accents soothe the Passions' startled storm,
And win the wavering will to Truth's resistless charm:

LXXXVIII.

'I too am come to offer thee a friend —
I, who have lingered o'er thy way unseen,
And all thy childhood's manly feats have kenned
Delighted. When I saw thee rising, e'en
As some sweet bud mid Spring's enameled green,
The pride and promise of the ancestral tree,
Hope fondly wispered that as erst had been
Illustrious sires, so Herakles should be:
Wilt thou, ingenuous Lycides? List then to me.

LXXXIX.

'No specious lure of promised bliss I bring, —
Unbending Truth thy wavering feet must speed:
Seek first the source whence all pure blessings spring!
Know 'tis THE GODS SUPERNAL have decreed
To sloth and slumber no immortal deed.
Amid the paths whose mazes guide amiss,
One only doth to Glory's summit lead,
And, sleepless sentries in the way of Peace,
Fatigue and Care forever guard the gates of Bliss.

XC.

'Wouldst favor find at 'Lympia's court supreme?
To guardian gods thy daily homage pay!
Wouldst wayward loved ones' faltering faith redeem?
Propel their pleasures and their pains allay!
Wouldst see the thorny wilds transformed away,—
Wide waving harvests o'er the landscape shine,—
Unnumbered flocks around thee gambol gay,—
Or gain the golden glitter of the mine?
Spurn not the plough,—thyself to lowly cares resign!

XCI.

'Dost burn to hear Athena's shouts proclaim
Thee champion-chief, her guardian tried and true?
Wouldst win with arm invincible a fame,
Which all-subduing Time shall not subdue?
Stand undismayed for Freedom's feeble few!
Let Greece be first beloved and last forgot!
Go Discipline's severest ordeal through,
For youthful effort moulds Man's future lot!
Release thy smothered power! Repulse shall baffle not.'

XCII.

But Kakia interrupts: 'Give ear no more!
Let Aretē beguile the idle wind!
Presumptuous is the pinion that would soar
To her high realms. Hath not herself defined
Craggy and steep the way? To me's assigned
A peaceful path mid flower-perfumed parterres;
Down sunny slopes, to scenes of sorrow blind,
My votaries glide. No tyrant's task is theirs.
Fast fly all cares away, and fleet flow on their years.'

XCIII.

'Aye, cherub-hydra!' Aretē outcries:
'There be who own thine *is* a sloping road.
On the fair mount that shines through silken skies,
Life's rosy prime of Youth and Hope they stood;
"The vain pursuit of fugitive false good"
Hath hurled them down abysmal depths below.
While steeper grew the steep, higher heaped the load
Which crushes Might in crepitude and woe,
And leaves to Age the sweets of but Remorse to know.

XCIV.

'Turn then, thou tempted one, whom Innocence
Hath ere now set high up my golden hill!
Turn! thou hast slid unconscious mid suspense.
Press on and up! new strength thine arm shall fill,
And soon thy subtle foe her clamor still.
When locked thy limbs, and silvered o'er thy head,
The irremeable pilgrimage shall thrill
Thy rapt soul musing on the fair scenes fled,
And cheerful shalt thou go, to sleep among the dead.

XCV.

'Among the dead? Ah, no! the chill, black wave
Of Lethe dares not Virtue's votaries claim,—
Thou'lt live, my boy, when Death shall boast thy grave,
For infant lips shall learn to lisp thy name,
And unborn millions catch thy bosom's flame.
Thy deeds shall deck the minstrel's loftiest lay,—
Patriots arise to emulate thy fame,—
Before them fade Invasion's dark array,
And Glory's plains and Grecia's altars own thy sway.'

XCVI.

He turned. Anon did Kakia disappear,
And forth he merges on the wondrous stage,—
Sweet Aretē stands unseen prompter near,
And Greece is tip-toe when his hands engage.
O Clio, mistress of the mythic page,
Say, lived there not some chieftain great and good—
The one lone light of a dim, distant age—
Whose patriot heart in valor singly stood,
And Freedom's 'furiate foes through flame and flood pursued?

XCVII.

What then though Fame, with trump of myriad mouth,
Hath decked in glories false her darling son?
Why stay the meed, though ne'er from North to South,
His foot hath traversed or his conflicts won,—
Ne'er Nemea's vale nor Lerna's fastness known
The lion strangled or the Hydra slain,—
Ne'er Heaven's high arch his shoulders hung upon,
Till Atlas' hand Hesperia's gold attain,
Nor he burst Pluto's realm, and 'scaped to light again.

XCVIII.

Sublime the myth proclaims, THE GOOD NE'ER DIE;
On Œta's wilds he mounts the magic pyre,
And straining azureward his filming eye,
Breathes: 'Take thy weary son, O sovereign Sire!'
Lo, deep in heaven a twinkling gem of fire!
It nearer looms on fleecy pennons wove
Of dazzled lightnings. Booms the Thunderer dire,
And flame-clouds wrap the martyr-haunted grove,
And bear the immortal boy to Aretē and Jove.

XCIX.

So hath the sage the mystery unsealed,—
So Greatness, shrined in Grecian breasts, arose,—
So Virtue grew, with valor blent and steeled.
So mould thy robur-might, and so repose,
Fair motherland, self-shielded from thy foes!
Then shall thy splendor know no setting sun,—
Nebraska's wilds shall blossom as the rose,—
The Pilgrim-shores, when rolling years be run,
Rise fair, the father-clime of many a WASHINGTON.

* * * * * * * *

C.

The morrow comes, and Myrtro is no more,
But Freedom lives and bends above his bier,
And Mercy smiles as flinty foes deplore,
And meek Religion wipes her falling tear.
Lone Zesto, forth! no longer faint or fear,
For thou — on thee his hallowed mantle fell.
At coward knife or bludgeon blow ne'er veer
From whither Duty's high behests impel!
And Earth and Heaven shall say: 'Good, faithful servant, WELL!'

Alas, my leisure Lay! 't is but begun,
Ere Sorrow comes, and I must cease to sing,
And, like poor loth Proserpinè, ere one
Slight wreath the flower-beguiled might bring
Away upon her fluttering breast, or spring
From dusky Haides' arms, forlorn but free, —
Forth must I, where low-thoughted Care shall wring
The balm-buds from my spirit. Let it be.
Who walks the dismal way Elysium's goal shall see.

NOTES.

[1] STANZA VII.

Not as when once the living torches, etc.

"Sometimes, covered by the skins of wild beasts, they [the Christians] were exposed to be torn in pieces by devouring dogs; some were crucified; others, wrapped in combustible garments which were set on fire, were made to serve as torches to illuminate the emperor's [Nero's] gardens by night."—*Willson's Out. Hist., p.* 194.

[2] STANZA VII.

Nor when, a god, the demon prince, etc.

"When by his [Domitian's] infamous vices, he had sunk, in the eyes of his subjects, to the lowest stage of degradation, he caused himself to be worshipped as a god, and addressed with reverence due to Deity. Both Jews and Christians were persecuted by him, and thousands of them put to death because they would not worship his statues."—*Id., p.* 200.

[3] STANZA VII.

Ne when mad Priestcraft Mary's reign upheld.

It must not be implied that the history of one religious party is exempt from the unfortunate charges predicable in that of another. Intolerance is not the child of a creed or religion, but of an all-obstinate and all-absorbing love of self-power, which prohibits Reason from modifying Opinion. Sometimes, in fact, the main difference between the martyrer and the martyred has been, simply that the former was in power, the latter, not.

[4] Stanza VII.

And Gallia's Charles his hand to butchery lent.

It is said that Charles IX, when asked, prior to the massacre of St. Bartholomew's, to sign the decree of extermination, was so appalled by the enormity of the plot, that he long hesitated; and, upon withdrawing his hand from the parchment, exclaimed: "Let none escape to reproach me!"

[5] Stanza XV.

Or Toil-doomed minions blast Athena's peace.

"The resources of tribute wrung from foreigners and dependents, are sternly limited and terribly precarious; they rot away the true spirit of industry in the people that demand the impost; they implant ineradicable hatred in the States that concede it."—*Bulwer's Athens.*

Upon the agency of captive and slave labor towards the downfall of Greece, see Review of Bulwer's Athens, *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1837.

[6] Stanza XXVIII.

And thence another name in Crime's black scroll.

John Brown's monomania seems to have assumed that the Fugitive Slave Act is opposed to the Law of Nature; that direct or indirect taxation and imposition, without representation, is a sufficient pretext, on the part even of colored men, for a declaration of Independence and an appeal to arms; and that Slavery is, *ab initio*, a state of war. Whether or not his premises were wild and unprecedented, some of his conclusions therefrom concerning the law of nations and the rights of individuals, seem logically inevitable.

[7] Stanza XXX.

> Then Maynard-like, though blazing perils plead,
> Guide on the flame-beleagured helm till spirit-freed.

At the burning of the Jersey on Lake Erie, Maynard, the helmsman, voluntarily sacrificed himself, to steer her ashore, and thus saved the lives of the passengers.

[8] Stanza XLVII.

> Yon spell-bound sail would find in thee a grave
> For her within, who sinketh with the sun.

"On our passage homeward, as the strength of Mrs. Judson declined, I expected to be under the necessity of burying her in the sea. But it was so ordered in Divine Providence, that when the indications of approaching death had become strongly marked, the ship came to anchor in the port of St. Helena. ..... On the following morning, no vestige of the island was discernible in the distant horizon. For a few days, in the solitude of my cabin, with my poor children crying around me, I could not help abandoning myself to heart-breaking sorrow. But the promises of the Gospel came to my aid, and Faith stretched her view to the bright world of eternal life; and anticipated a happy meeting with those beloved beings whose bodies are mouldering at Amherst and St. Helena."

To the humanitarian, it is a hope-inspiring fact, that, whether in the shackles of creed prejudice, or not, men unanimously revere and love the *philanthropy* of Judson and his amiable co-laborers. Instance the many lyrics to their memory, and especially, the more popular ones of Phelps, Washburn, and Sigourney, in the '*Judson Offering*,' *p.* 222 *et seq.*, where also Judson's touching narrative is given in full.

[9] STANZA LII.

'T was midnight, and the seven-hilled city slept.

The occurrence on which the legend of Curtius is based, is related by Schmitz (Hist. Rome, Ch. X.) to have taken place B. C. 365. The outline of our sketch is partially drawn therefrom; but the historical fact whence the story arose, originated in the Sabine war as early as B. C. 750, as appears from Livy's account (Lib. I, Cap. XII.) and Plutarch's (Romul. 18). Like many myths, it seems to be an actual incident, so transformed in process of time that its hero may personify some great national idea — here, the patriot martyr. For several charming phantasies on the legend, and its æsthetic effects upon different mental temperaments, see Mr. Hawthorn's late beautiful work — The Marble Faun, whence was suggested the thought in stanza LXVII.

[10] STANZA LXIX.

Recked not, I ween, th' all-just, good Providence,
'Yahouh,' 'Jove' or 'God,' — the titles' difference.

These and the succeeding lines will not be considered Pantheistical, if it be remembered that the names of the supreme divinity in the Hebrew, Egyptian, Greek and Roman theologies, are all derived from one root, signifying 'the permanent Being;' and that the idea of the infinite First Cause, is a primary intuition, as universal as the human race. But there are yet those who will not concede to the theistic system of ancient heathendom a solitary scintilla of 'orthodox' light. Hence we cite briefly from writers 'heathen.'

Diodorus calls the Deity of Moses, 'Iaw,' which is nearly identical with the Syrian dialectic, 'Yahouh,' signifying, the Existing, the Life-principle. "The Egyptians, assigning names to the five elements, called spirit [or ether] 'Youpiter,' on

account of the true meaning of that word; for spirit is the source of life, author of the vital principle in animals, and for this reason they considered him as the father, the generator of beings. For the same reason, Homer says: 'father and king of men and gods.'"— *Diod., Lib. I, Cap. I.*

"In fine, Jupiter is the world, the universe, that which constitutes the life of all beings. As the philosophers could invent no figure that could represent all his attributes, they painted him in the form of a man. He is in a sitting posture, in allusion to his immutable essence. The upper part of his body is uncovered, because it is in the upper regions of the universe that he is most conspicuous. He is covered from the waist downward, because respecting terrestrial things he is more mysterious. He holds a sceptre in his left hand, because it is the side of the heart, and the heart is the seat of the understanding, which regulates every action."— *Porphyry, (in Euseb. Præpar. Evang., p.* 101.)

"Moses, an Egyptian priest, taught that it was a monstrous error to represent the Deity under the form of animals, as the Egyptians did, or in the shape of men, as was the practice of the Greeks and Africans. That alone is the Deity, said he, which constitutes heaven, earth and being,—that which we call the world, the sum of all things, nature; and no reasonable person will think of representing such a being by the image of any one of the objects around us. Hence, wishing the Deity to be worshipped without emblems, he ordered a temple worthy of his proper nature to be erected," etc.— *Strabo, Geog., XVI.*

11 Stanza LXX.

> To this, within us and without, we bend
> Our yearning spirits by innate behest.

"Of all the evidences, man is himself a living embodiment. If you want the argument from *design*, then you see in the human

form the most perfect of all known organization. If you want the argument from *being*, then man in his conscious dependence has the clearest conviction of that independent and absolute *One* on which his own being reposes. If you want the argument from *reason* and *morals*, then the human mind is the only known repository of both. Man is, in fact, a microcosm — a universe in himself; and whatever proof the whole universe affords, is involved in principle in man himself. With the *image* of God before us, who can doubt of the Divine type?"—*Morell's Hist. Spec. Philos.* 19*th Cent.*, *p.* 740.

But the doctrine, that our idea of Truth, of the Infinite, Absolute and Self-Existent, has birth in the depths of Consciousness, is most philosophically and subtly enunciated by Mons. Cousin: "It is by observation, that within the penetralia of the Consciousness, and at a depth to which Kant never descended, under the apparent relativeness and subjectivity of necessary principles, I have succeeded in seizing and analyzing the instantaneous, but veritable fact of the spontaneous apperception of truth — an apperception which not immediately reflecting itself, passes unperceived in the depths of the Consciousness; yet is the real basis of that, which later, under a logical form, and in the hands of reflection, becomes a necessary conception. All subjectivity and reflectivity expires in the spontaneity of apperception. But the primitive light is so pure that it is unperceived; it is the reflected light which strikes us, but often in doing so, sullies with its faithless lustre the purity of the former. Reason becomes subjective by its connection with the free and voluntary *Me*, which is the type of all subjectivity; but in itself it is impersonal, it does not appertain any more to one than to another, it does not even appertain to humanity as a whole, its laws emanate only from itself." — Tr. from *Vol. II*, *p.* 33, (*Brussels ed.*)

The exclamation of a good theological metaphysician, a few years since,— T. Parker, I think,— that "Atheism is impossible

in any mind at normal action," is no longer deemed more startling than true. Any one, however, who may distrust the 'doxy' of the stanza, will find his questioning fully disposed of in Cousin, "*on the True, the Beautiful, and the Good*," *Sect. IV: "God, the Principle of Principles,"* (*Wight's tr. ed., p.* 75).

[12] STANZA LXXX.

To burning Zesto then, thy Sage's tale.

Socrates accredits the story to "Prodicus the Wise." With the exception of one or two similes, we present little else than a literal translation of the words Xenophon makes fall from the lips of his master. To deviate from the eloquent simplicity of his recital, would be the impudence of seeking the beauty of Originality at the ruin of the beauty of Perfection.